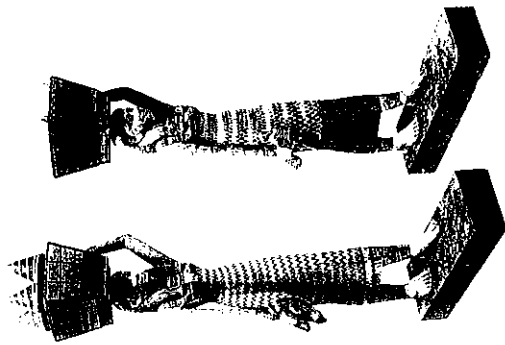


## CLOTHING

**T**RAVELLING AS A FOREIGNER, you'll want to decide whether to conform to local customs. Should you choose to present yourself as an outsider

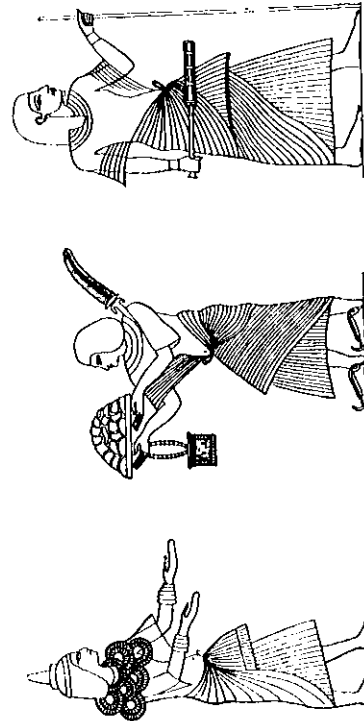


*The tubular sheath dress has long been popular with fashionable ladies. What the best-dressed bureaucrats are wearing these days.*

in your usual garb, make sure your clothes are clean and presentable, as the Egyptians perceive foreigners to be dirty and unkempt, much as they might be fascinated by your exotic attire.

On the other hand, it might be better to go native and dress in the manner of an Egyptian, preferably one of some importance. As everywhere, clothes reflect one's social status. At one extreme are manual labourers clad in filthy loin-cloths; at the other, royal family members and top bureaucrats in pleated, gleaming white outfits unsoiled by manual labour. It should be obvious which group it is best to imitate.

Men of status usually wear a wrap-around skirt or kilt of linen secured at the waist and sometimes accompanied by an apron or a sash over the shoulder. The kilt can be worn with a tunic-shirt, but a knee- or ankle-length tunic, secured at the waist, can also serve as a fashionable garment. For the ladies, the tubular sheath dress has been popular for centuries. It is typically form-fitting and is

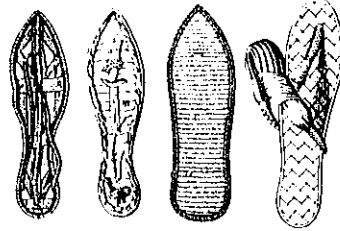


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## PRICE OF CLOTHING

Prices of clothing vary depending on the quality of the linen or other materials. You can expect to pay somewhere between 3 and 5 deben for a tunic and between 10 and 50 for a skirt. The lowly loin-cloth costs 5-16 deben and a shawl or cloak, 20-50. By comparison, sandals are quite a bargain and average around 2 deben per pair.

held up by shoulder straps, either with or without the breasts exposed. The lovely dancing girls who perform at parties might wear a fishnet dress or nothing more than a belt with a few dangling bead tassels. Shawls and cloaks are worn by both men and women for fashion and warmth. Sandals manufactured from strips of papyrus or constructed from leather are available, although many workers prefer to go barefoot. The



*Some examples of fine Egyptian footwear.*

*Elaborate hairstyles of the well-to-do. Don't be deceived: most are wigs!*



children of Egypt typically scamper about quite naked; even their heads are shorn bare, save a sidelock of hair that signifies youth.

Egyptians of both sexes pay a good amount of attention to hair and make-up. Men's hairstyles, for example, range from the comfortable, closely cropped coiffures of the working man to the long elaborate wigs worn by members of the upper classes. Mirrors of polished bronze assist in the application of eye make-up, which is made from a dark-grey powdered pigment called *masdamer* (kohl) and worn by both women and men from all walks of life. You might try some on yourself: *masdamer* is thought to protect the eyes from both the bright sun and ocular diseases, which are not unusual in Egypt.

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## SANITATION

### GOLD

As in most cultures around the Mediterranean, gold is highly prized in Egypt for its beautiful gleaming colour and amazing malleability. The Egyptians refer to this metal poetically as the 'flesh of the gods'. It is mined in the harsh quarries of the eastern desert, extracted from Nubia, extorted as tribute or retrieved as booty from foreign lands. Silver is much rarer and has been called the 'bones of the gods'. Most of it is imported from western Asia. Other precious materials, such as the blue stone lapis lazuli, come from as far away as Afghanistan and are obtained through trade.

Jewelry is universally popular and Egypt's many specialized craftsmen have mastered all aspects of its production. Beads and pendants of faience (glazed ceramic) are produced in many hues and are quite affordable. On the luxury end of the scale are exquisite creations in gold and silver that can be embellished with beautiful stones such as carnelian and turquoise. Rings and beaded collars are quite fashionable, as are armlets, anklets and bracelets. Should you have the opportunity to watch some of the better Egyptian jewellers at work – perhaps even one of the pharaoh's own goldsmiths – you will witness a level of skill at work that will remain unsurpassed for thousands of years to come.

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are common and occasionally enjoy the fortuitous treat of an inattentive bather.

### MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

**EVERY TRAVELLER HOPES TO AVOID** disease and injury while on the road, or in this case, on the Nile. Realistically, though, there is always a risk of illness or accidental physical harm. But don't let this deter you: should you be so unlucky, help is available from Egyptian medical professionals.

The Egyptian physician is known as a *sponsoo*. There's a hierarchy of these professionals, ranging from the local healers to those providing medical care for the pharaoh himself. Unless you're bringing in something new and exotic from the outside world, which will be most unappreciated, Egyptian physicians will be aware of the symptoms of various common afflictions and injuries. With the empire's ongoing military adventures and big construction activities,

they have centuries of experience in treating traumatic wounds. Dentists can be found here and there to take care of problems with your teeth and gums, and there are even specialist practitioners who address things such as gynaecological woes, snakebites and scorpion stings.

Should you need to visit a physician, don't be surprised if the doctor orders up an emetic to induce vomiting or some sort of enema concoction, or inserts a medicinal compound into one orifice or another to purge the body. The Egyptians believe that many illnesses are caused by the contaminating residues of internal bodily wastes. If you're suffering from one of the maladies common to many travellers, however, your body might already be purging itself on its own.

Egyptian medications are typically mixtures derived from a variety of plants, animals and minerals. Some include exotic ingredients such as mother's milk, urine from a virgin, excrement from flies, lizards, specific

### RECIPES

Despite the fact that many Egyptians actually shave their heads, to serve the 'folically challenged', Egyptian physicians have developed the following recipe to cure baldness:

#### TO CAUSE HAIR TO GROW ON A BALD PERSON:

*fat of lion, 1 (part);  
fat of hippopotamus, 1 (part);  
fat of crocodile, 1 (part);  
fat of cat, 1 (part); fat of snake, 1 (part);  
fat of ibex, 1 (part);*

*make as one thing, smear (or anoint) the head of the bald person with it.*

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### THE LIFESPAN

The lifespan of the typical Egyptian worker is relatively short, between thirty and thirty-six years. Members of the upper classes, removed from the wear and tear of physical labour, can live decades longer. The present ruler, Ramesses II, for instance, has been on the throne for fifty-four years and is in his mid-seventies.